



March 8, 2022

To the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement:

On behalf of the Connecticut Council on Adoption, I am writing in support of Raised Bill No. 5299, an act increasing the age for eligibility for the postsecondary education funding program offered by DCF.

We are a not-for-profit, 501c3, voluntary organization dedicated to permanence for children and ethical, effective adoption practices in the state of Connecticut. For over 40 years we have served as a resource and as advocates to all of those who are touched by adoption. We welcome adoptive families, birth families, adoptees and adoption professionals, and agencies working with adoptive families as members.

CCA's mission is to support and promote the goal of permanence for children. The organization's primary focus is on the quality and effectiveness of adoption practices. CCA supports RB 5299 because many of the youth placed for adoption by the Department are unable to take advantage of the postsecondary funding program due to the current age criteria. Due to the disruptions these youth experience in their childhood, many do not begin kindergarten at the same time as their non-DCF committed peers and will therefore be delayed in graduating from high school and applying to post secondary programs. Additionally, because of the impact on children and youth of trauma related to neglect and abuse leading to their involvement with the Department, many of them are not prepared to begin college/vocational programs at the same time as their peers and may need additional time to complete a course of study. CCA supports this bill that increases the age of eligibility for both applying and qualifying for funding from DCF and increasing the age for completion of such post-secondary education to thirty years of age.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Myers, LMSW
President, CT Council on Adoption